Dear Mr. Zanders

[illegible] ways

Mtt.11:7What went ye out into the wilderness to see?

Intro. Thanksgiving, the forerunner of the holiday season of the year,
Since the greatest holiday of all, Xmas is centered in a personality, at this time my thots have been upon the the forerunner of the Christ, namely, St.John, the baptist,
Text: What went ye out into the wilderness to see?

This question paints the picture of the crowds leaving the ~~crowded~~ thickly populated c cities and going out into the wild and sparsely settled regions called the wilderness.
Lots of sunshine and pure air, some flowers and plenty of sand.
But no palaces or gilded temples, no noisy marts of trade, no glamor, no fight for power, no pride, no hypocracy, no injustice, no oppression, no restlessness nor despair.

What extraordinary thing has happened to cause the cities to empty themselves into the desert region? No news-paper announcement no advertising, no megaphone heralding.

Before answering the ? let us look at th picture- that of swarms of people rushing out into the wilderness for help.

Over and over again humanity has had to go back to the wilderness for help.

Jerusalem is not the only place that learned that pomp and power and wealth may lead to failure. Corrupt government, rotten society and and degenerate religion with all their sham, hypocracy, injustice and oppression, always

trail in their wake suffering and misery.

We build big houses and big ships. We invent, discover and project. We gratify our cravings with every new thrill that is on the market. Then some day we again see sanely an then ask ourselves-" "Is this all there is to life- the passion for pleasure, the struggle for position, the fight for power, the rush for gain, and then the end?" We are like children building blocks just for the fun of knocking them down again. Many people live just such a life. Then comes disillusionment and the people are ready for the desert again. We would like to get away from it all, if we only could. We rush out into the wilderness for help- and what has the wilderness to offer?

Just one thing- a man! An honest, sincere, earnest, fearless, incorruptible, unpurchasable man. The crowd found a man beyond the Jordan. That was all, nothing but just a man.

This is all God ever has to offer a world that has grown anaemic, a civilization that has become stale and exhausted.

When a new nation was to be created there was Abraham: when a people was to be emancipated there was Moses: when they were to be led into a new country there was Joshua, when an insiginficant people was to be raised into astrong world power there was David: and when there was a world of humanity to be saved there was Jesus of Nazareth.

Every great reformation has had a man at the head of it and at the heart of it. Methods and tools and insitutions shift about it is the will, the soul of a man that makes the age.

Ours is the age of tools, machinery and co-operation, institutional effort; nevertheless man is still on top.

When things go wrong, when civilization fails, when greed and graft and corruption abound, when pomp and power over-reach and betray, and when society sickens and cries for help, the remedy will come- not in some new act of legislation, or some outlet for trade; it will come as it always has come- in a man great enough and good enough to call humanity back to what is simple, pure, honest and sincere.

Nearly all such men who save the day for us have been a wilderness product, the men who have kived close to nature. A dweller in God's open. An elemental man. Such was the man in the wilderness, John the Baptist.

At first they may have laughed at his clothes and eccentric habits. But as they listened to him they became convinced of his sincerity and power and they gave him the right of way.

Let us see of this wilderness man is indeed a leader. Can he himself resist the bribes and influences of the cities? Does he practice what he preaches? Will popularity turn his head? Will the city contaminate and tame him?

Let us look at this Christ portrait of the man and see.

1. The man has convictions-he is not a reed. He stands like steel, whether the crowd is with him or not. How often our supposed man turns out to be a reed, swaying this way and that, a wily politician trying to please everybody, promising much and fulfilling nothing!

2. The man has character. He is not clothed in soft raiment. The fine thing is not what he has on, but hat he is. Not his clothes but himself, his character.

My Disappointment in Taiffee. A man of convictions but of no character.

3. The man has a message. He is a prophet. John's message was simple, straight, honest. Everybody understood it. And if the crowd did not like it they could leave it.

How often have we listened to a man's message, hoping to hear a prophet but only discovering a little partisan politician seeking office. We go away saying, "Fooled again!"

4. The man from the wilderness has more than convictions, character and a message. Jesus said John was greater than a prophet. There is something about the man we cannot put into words. There is the divine part of him, that which links him to God. A man to be a leader must have God with him.

Such was the man who drew the crowds from the city and ushered in the Messiah. He calls his times back to simplicity, reality, purity and righteousness.

He is the man the world always needs. We need him today. Every town and state needs a few men like John the Baptist.

What chance is there for such men today? With all of our reclamation projects the wilder- has not gone out of business. In some humble hom a boy may be in training to save the city.

5. On some farm a youth may be growing to manhood who will some day rally the forces of righteousness.

If you are consistentm earnest and sincere in your teaching in sunday school, there may be one in your class who some day will so lift up the Christ before men as to turn sin-sick humanity back into the paths of righteousness that lead to God and eternal life.

"I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto myself."

As we--approach the celevration of the birth of Jesus Christ may a study of John the Baptist prepare our way to offer an homage to the Babe in the Manger that shall bring the Christ into our lives and into the lives of others in still greater measure.

The least in the Kingdom is greater than John the Baptist. Such does greater opportunity to live & demonstrate the Christ life.